

OPINION

www.independentfreepress.com

Phone: 905-873-0301
Fax: 905-873-0398

Winners and losers

Now that Canada has passed the powerhouse nations of Mongolia and Togo in the medal standings at the Beijing Olympics, we hope the national hand-wringing about the state of our amateur athletic program ceases.

At this writing, Canada had a total of 13 medals, which was good enough for 17th place. Four years ago in Athens the Canuck squad placed 21st with 12 medals (three gold, six silver and three bronze). With the potential of more medals to come, Beijing is not the disaster some were predicting earlier in the Games.

With Canada's slow march to the medal podium, the airwaves were burning with various opinions about amateur athletics in this country and how they are funded. Some pundits were questioning whether taxpayers should even continue to fund amateur athletics if our "personal best" times were only good enough for an 18th place finish. Others argued more money—much more—is needed for better results.

Certainly, with child obesity rates skyrocketing, supporting amateur athletes would seem to serve a higher social purpose.

However, perhaps a simple change in mindset for our athletes would also prove beneficial. A common refrain heard from Canadian athletes at these Games was their enjoyment at "just taking part" in the Olympics—no anger at finishing fourth, no disappointment that a personal best left them in 16th place.

Perhaps this "oh, well" attitude is a result of recent trends to not focus on winning and losing when it comes to minor sports. Minor soccer clubs and ball leagues often don't even keep scores in games for their younger players so there are no "winners and losers".

It's a puzzling way of operating. Sports is about winning and losing—it is a competition. Young kids can, contrary to some people's beliefs, deal with being on a team that lost to a better squad without suffering irreparable psychological damage.

A child's psyche is very malleable at the age of six and a loss in a soccer game will be forgotten by the time the team goes for a post-game ice cream cone. In the meantime, that youngster will have learned an important life lesson—that sometimes you win and sometimes you lose.

Just like our Olympians.

What do you think?

Below are the results of our most recent online poll. For the current poll go to www.independentfreepress.com

The Town has decided to spend \$1 million over the next four years to keep Memorial Arena in operation. What would you suggest be done with the 86-year-old arena?

• Close it (25%)

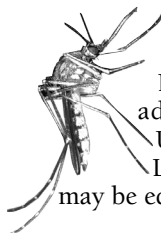
• Spend whatever it takes to keep it operational (33%)

• Spend whatever it takes to build a new arena then close Memorial (17%)

• Spend whatever it takes to build a new arena and also put money into keeping Memorial operational (25%)

Something bugging you?

Send us a letter!



Letters to the editor must include an address and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters will not be published.

Letters should not exceed 200 words and may be edited for content and/or length.

E-mail:

jmcghie@independentfreepress.com

Mail or drop off:

Independent & Free Press, 280 Guelph St., Unit 29, Georgetown, ON., L7G 4B1

THE INDEPENDENT & FREE PRESS

The Independent & Free Press is published Wednesday and Friday and is one of several Metroland Media Group Ltd. community newspapers. Editorial and advertising content of The Independent & Free Press is protected by copyright. Unauthorized use is prohibited.



Steve Nease



STAFF DIRECTORY

Publisher
Ken Nugent

Advertising director
Steve Foreman
(sforeman@independentfreepress.com)

Retail advertising manager
Cindi Campbell
(ccampbell@independentfreepress.com)

Managing editor
John McGhie
(jmcghie@independentfreepress.com)

Distribution manager
Nancy Geissler
(distribution@independentfreepress.com)

ADVERTISING

Advertising co-ordinator
Jennifer Christie (jchristie@independentfreepress.com)

Retail Sales:
Jennifer Spencer (jspencer@independentfreepress.com)
Brendan Louth (blouth@independentfreepress.com)
Amy Sykes (features@independentfreepress.com)
Andrea Lefebvre (alefebvre@independentfreepress.com)
Brendon Stevenson (bstevenson@independentfreepress.com)

Real estate:
Sue Spizziri (realestate@independentfreepress.com)

Classifieds:
Kristie Pells (classified@independentfreepress.com)

ACCOUNTING

Rose Marie Gauthier, Michelle McEachern

EDITORIAL

Cynthia Gamble: News editor
(cgamble@independentfreepress.com)

Ted Brown: Photography
(tbrown@independentfreepress.com)

Lisa Tallyn: Staff writer
(ltallyn@independentfreepress.com)

Eamonn Maher: Staff writer/sports
(emaher@independentfreepress.com)

PRODUCTION:

Mary Lou Foreman, Kevin Powell, Shelli Harrison, Dolores Black, Debbie MacDougall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEC decision on track was short-sighted

Dear editor,

I am writing to inform you about a grave injustice made by the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) on July 17.

You might have heard about the BMX track in Halton Hills, which was named after my late brother, Tim DaSilva. Two years and two days after we lost Tim, his family and friends, tried everything possible to get the NEC to change their old-fashioned way of thinking. We had to flatten the track where my brother took his last breath, a track made with his sweat and tears and blood.

My brother died trying to build the best BMX facility in Canada in order to get the children of the future to the Olympics. Tell me how voting in

favour of 10 or so neighbours is the right thing to do when, in order to do that, you are throwing away the dreams and chances for hundreds of children in our community?

The Ontario government has put programs into place for children to get active and healthy. They even started up a program where parents can be partially reimbursed for enrolling their children in sport activities. This year, for the first time ever, BMX is an Olympic sport. How can anyone say no to having a facility as well maintained as Tim DaSilva BMX, which is totally self-sufficient, run by volunteers and costs no one a penny?

Commissioner member Joan Little said that she "felt for the DaSilvas but her heart goes out to the neighbours

'Bigger vision' expected from NEC, says reader

Dear editor,

I am very surprised and disappointed that the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) has decided to level the Tim DaSilva BMX track.

In both the Act (sections 8.c and 8.f) and the NEC Plan (Objectives 3. and 6.) we find the the following two objectives: "To provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation;" and "To provide for adequate public access to the Niagara Escarpment."

I further examined both the NEC Act and Plan and a BMX track is in compliance with both. I am not familiar with the procedures that the building of the track followed and I hear the NEC claims procedural violations.

Even with that, it seems that levelling a few mounds of earth that are used for recreational cycling is a small act by people we would expect bigger vision from. Cycling is as green as it gets. Recreation is encouraged on the Escarpment lands. How can levelling a BMX track built by world class experts be anything but wrong?

I encourage every parent whose children enjoy cycling to speak up against this. The track is the right thing in the right place. It is good stewardship. It is very good for our community.

Please speak up. Let us keep this track.

Ken Kopke, Georgetown

who put their hard-earned cash into those properties". Neighbour Jack Pemberton, stated that a BMX facility is comparable to growing marijuana in his backyard. Comparing BMXing to pot, was a low blow thrown at us without a chance to rebut the issue.

He also mentioned that his property value has decreased. I would think it was the opposite, because if you have ever seen the grounds at Halton Place you would agree that it is always immaculately kept.

Tim will NEVER be forgotten, he will always be honoured and the NEC doesn't deserve to have such an outstanding facility under their jurisdiction. They have decided that money means more than a legacy. They have shown the community that they are only interested in the well-being of their fellow generation members and not future generations.

Jessica DaSilva Medeiros, Milton

Youths impress resident

Dear editor,

On July 28 local youths had a music bash or a dance in the Lions Club by Memorial Arena.

Many of them were milling around in the parking lot, having fun as kids will do. They finished up their night at a reasonable time and went home.

However, what really impressed me was the next morning a group of these youths came back to clean up the garbage left in the parking lot.

Who said the young ones have no responsibility?

Roper Galloway, Georgetown